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## Assessment of Nigeria Food Security Situation

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### Abstract

An assessment of food security situation in Nigeria was carried out by tracing the trends in food supplies since independence. Before the civil war in 1967–1970, Nigeria was self-sufficient in food production. The problem of food inadequacies started during the civil war (1967–70) when agriculture inputs and machinery as well as other items were deliberately curtailed to conserve foreign exchange. These problems eased after the civil war but resurfaced in 1974 as windfalls from crude oil export result in further neglect of the agricultural sector. The period, 1974 to early 1980's witnessed massive movement of labour and other productive resources away from the agriculture sector to other sector of the economy where returns were higher. Also there were massive importation of food as during this period. Imported food items rose from 2.1 million in 1974 to 3.3, 3.5 and 3.74 million dollars respectively in '77 '78, '79 respectively. The food import bill rose from a mere 0.9 million dollars in 1970 to 1974 to 7.45 million dollars 1981. Even with this per capital calorific food supply declined from the surplus of the 1960s to a deficit of 38 percent in 1982. The share of agriculture in total exports to merely 2 percent during this period. This led to neglect of agricultural sector and the drift of labour force from the rural areas to the urban area during the 'oil boom era' which have caused the first major short fall in food supply. The effort of the Federal Government in arresting the short falls in food supply through enunciation of different agricultural policies, which were either poorly implemented. The Federal Government in an effort to create an enabling environment for the private sector participation government deregulates the economy in 1986 and introduced Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) owing to high import component of agricultural input production cost rose and prices of staple food were found to have increased to a greater degree than the pre-sap periods. Other factors observed to have contributed to the shortage in food supply and high prices are inefficient storage facilities, poor transportation and inappropriate processing technology.

**Keywords:** Food security, food supply, processing technology, storage facilities